

WGS 2500: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
Spring 2019
Online Course

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In-Person Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:30-1:00 and by appointment

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Course Description:

The focus of this course is to introduce students to concepts and issues emerging in the field of women's and gender studies and contemporary debates taking place in feminist theory and scholarship. This course is an introduction to critical thinking about the social construction of gender and the intersections of gender with race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and nation. In this class we will investigate the past, present, and future of feminist scholarship and activism. We will also investigate the ways in which gender studies intersect with multiple facets of our lives. Our investigation will proceed through reading the work of a diverse group of feminist writers, researchers, and activists in the United States and abroad.

WGS 2500 fulfills **General Education** credit in the **Humanities**. You can find more information about General Education in the Humanities credit [here](#). This means that in order to fulfill this credit, students are expected to *demonstrate an understanding of historical, cultural, and philosophical complexity, which supports sophisticated discourse*.

Course Objectives:

- To gain an understanding of how women's and gender studies and feminist theory have evolved and affected other viewpoints within the academic world and wider social and cultural knowledge
- To examine gendered lives through a socio-historical, critical and feminist lens that engages a full discussion of social location and intersectionality
- To recognize the diversity of feminist thought
- To promote creative, self-directed learning

Course Materials:

All our readings are on Moodle. It is your responsibility to download and read them. Students will also need access to a Netflix account. If this is an issue, please contact me immediately and I will help!

Getting Help:

Office hours – You can email me at any time (dberk@lsu.edu). When you e-mail me, always include your name, the course for which you are enrolled (WGS 2500) and your discussion group and discussion leader. I will respond within 1-2 business days. I usually respond quickly M-F. Do not expect a fast response on weekends, after 5:00 pm on a weekday, university holidays, or if I am traveling for work. I am happy to set up appointments for office hours or a meeting at a coffee shop or similar location that is convenient for you. I am also available for phone and skype meetings. In sum, there are a variety of ways you can communicate with me to get your questions answered. Please choose the one that is best suited to the question you have.

Technical issues – **If you have any technical issues, please do not contact me for help.** Instead, you need to contact the LSU Help Desk or use online GROK articles and tutorials to resolve your issue. The LSU Help Desk is available at 225-578-3375. You can also go online to set up a request, email the help desk (helpdesk@lsu.edu), or chat online with a help desk analyst (<https://grok.lsu.edu/Article.aspx?articleid=11294>). If a technical issue interferes with your ability to get your course work done by a deadline, you will need documentation of that technical issue from the LSU Help Desk (via an official email or phone call from them to me). No exceptions will be made to this policy. So if you have a technical issue or question, you should contact them immediately.

Discussion forums– If you have any questions about our online discussion forums, contact your discussion leader. For questions related to other aspects of your work or the course, contact me.

Technical Requirements

Moodle runs on Windows, Mac, Linux, iOS, Android, and other devices that have web browser capability. It is highly recommended, however, that you do NOT use mobile devices to complete course assignments like quizzes because Moodle functions best on a PC/Mac rather than a mobile device. LSU recommends you use either Chrome or Firefox for Moodle2. You will also need to have Javascript enabled and have the latest version of Adobe Flash. I recommend that you review and/or use as reference the training manuals posted to GROK for Moodle if you have any questions about how to complete the work in this course (<https://moodle2.grok.lsu.edu>).

Netiquette

Communicating online can easily lead to conflict because there is no way for people to read additional interactive cues like facial expression, tone of voice, or emotion. You therefore need to be very careful to avoid engaging in practices that can make conflicts more likely—especially since the subjects we learn about in this course may produce strong emotional responses. Here are a few pieces of advice on how to effectively and respectfully communicate and interact in an online course:

- ***Respect your classmates' privacy*** – What happens in class stays in class. Unless you directly ask for and receive permission, do not share information you learn about people with anyone else.
- ***Speak only for yourself*** – No one in this class has the authority to speak for *all* straight people, gay people, people of color, women, men, LSU students, or even for *one* other person. Tell us what you believe and feel when talking about personal experience and viewpoint. If you are making an assertion that goes beyond that, find research-based evidence to support your assertions and cite the studies you are talking about. Always be clear about which of the two you are doing (talking about personal views or discussing research findings).
- ***Use humanizing language*** – If you take issue with something someone says, respond to the idea rather than attacking the person. Marginalized people have the latitude to use the terms they find empowering to talk about themselves and the groups they belong to, but all students will refrain from using the n-word, the word “fag,” any word ending with “-ed” (eg. transgendered, colored, etc.), or any other similarly derogatory term in discussion or in written work.
- ***Listen to what people say*** – If someone shares an experience or viewpoint, we can and will analyze it, think about its connection to broader social patterns, explore its ramifications, and link it to our course materials. We will not, however, openly disbelieve, discount, or discredit what others say about their own experiences. Sharing personal stories can be scary in a classroom full of strangers—so let's give each other the benefit of the doubt and believe what people say about their own lives, even when subjecting our experiences to critical analysis.
- ***Take time before responding*** – If something another person in the class says upsets you, take at least 24 hours before responding. You might even consider letting friends read your reply before sending it. Also avoid using all capital letters because it gives the impression that you are yelling. If you want to emphasize a point, use asterisks around a word.

Intellectual Property Statement—Stance on Sharing Coursework

Do not share ANY of my course materials, your own work, or any other students' work on the Internet or elsewhere. Doing so is a violation of both copyright law and my/your peers' intellectual property rights. Discovery of any such conduct shall be taken seriously and reported to the Dean of Students for sanction.

CLASS POLICIES

Late work: I will not accept late work. You therefore need to be certain that you turn in your work on time. If you have a problem submitting assignments via Moodle for any reason (technical issues, etc.), get your work to me on time in another way (via email, for example). If you will miss work because of a religious holiday or because you have an emergency situation, notify me in advance (or as soon as possible). See university policy statement PS-22 for detailed explanation of excused absences. You will need to provide documentation (such as a doctor's note) via email prior to missing class or within 48 hours in order for it to be excused.

File formats: You are responsible for submitting your work in an electronic format that is functional. If you send me a file that is corrupt or that I cannot open, you will not get credit for it and you will not be provided a chance to resubmit a functional file on a later date. If you have any question about whether or not your file(s) will be readable, you should submit it to me early and ask for confirmation that it opened without problems.

Extra credit: There is no extra credit for the course.

Re-grades: If you believe that your work has been inaccurately graded, you have 48 hours from the day the assignment was graded to submit a request for a re-grade. Once those 48 hours have passed, your work will no longer be eligible for grading reconsideration. Note that if you ask for a regrade, your whole assignment (not just one question, paragraph, or portion of it) will be subject to regrading.

Academic honesty: Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. See <http://saa.lsu.edu/code-student-conduct> for LSU's Code of Conduct. You are responsible for reading and understanding university policies on academic honesty. If you violate the code of conduct, sanctions will be applied.

Learning disabilities: Students who are eligible for extended time on tests and other educational accommodations need to provide documentation from LSU's Office of Disability Services.

Course Requirements

Exams (4)	50%
Weekly Quizzes (10)	25%
Discussion Forum Participation (10)	15%
Padlets (5)	10%

Below is the grading scale for this course.

Grading Scale				
• A+	• B+	•• C+	D+	•• F
98-100%	88-89%	78-79%	68-69%	0-59%
A	B	C	D	F
93-97%	83-87%	73-77%	63-67%	0-59%
A-	B-	C-	D-	F
90-92%	80-82%	70-72%	60-62%	0-59%
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Description of Graded Work

Exams (4) 50% of Total Grade

At 8 different times throughout the semester, you will have the opportunity to take an essay exam that will count toward your final grade. You are required to answer 4 of these exam questions. Each exam will be a short essay question designed to test your critical knowledge of the material discussed in power points and in the textbook. I have taken the liberty to spread these exams out in a thoughtful and calculated manner throughout the course of the semester, rather than saving them for the end, when you likely have a multitude of assignments and exams to attend to in your other courses.

You will have 24 hours to complete each exam. Each exam will open at 8 am on Wednesday of the week and close at 11:59 on Sunday of the week. You can take the exam at any time during that period. If you haven't completed the exam at 11:59 on the due date your exam will automatically be submitted regardless of your completion status. So if you are currently working on the exam when that time hits it will be auto submitted. **START EARLY!**

Do not ask me if you can take 5 exams and drop the lowest grade. **THIS IS NOT AN OPTION!** You may only take 4 exams and these are the 4 exams that will count towards your final grade.

Online Quizzes (10) 25% of Total Grade

Most weeks you will be expected to complete a quiz on Moodle designed to assess your knowledge on all the material for that week. The quizzes will generally be 10 questions and will be a combination of multiple-choice questions and true and false questions. Each student will have 1 attempt at each quiz and a one-hour time limit. There are 11 quizzes in total but only 10 will be counted toward your final grade, as I will drop the lowest quiz grade. Each week, quizzes will open each Friday at 8 am and are due on that same day at 11:59 pm.

Discussion (10) 15% of Total Grade

Students are required to participate in online discussions that are facilitated through Moodle. I expect each student to participate thoughtfully. On the last slide (or sometimes two slides) of each power point presentation, I have included detailed questions that you should use to prompt your discussion forum. Then you will reply to others' posts at least two times before the deadline. You will be graded on both, your initial discussion post and your replies. There are 10 discussion forum posts that are calculated in your final grade.

Initial posts: Discussions on the board will take the form of threads – which are chains of comments that follow an original post. Each thread starts with an original post. Students are required to make one new discussion topic each week.

Replies: Replies are your response to a thread topic or to another student. Students are required to make at least 2 replies each week. Your discussion grade for the week is the average of how your comments are rated.

Discussion leaders and I will interject occasionally to facilitate and guide discussion. In addition, we will always intervene if we notice any unprofessional or inappropriate comments or to correct factual errors. However, for the most part, we want your discussion to be a space where you (the students) create and steer the dialogue. We therefore will engage sparingly and only when necessary.

You can make a **MAXIMUM** of 3 posts per 24-hour period. So you need to think about this and space your posts out throughout the week.

The discussion forums are organized into groups of 10 students. That means each student will only discuss class topics with 9 other students rather than the whole class. The groups will be decided randomly by software in Moodle the first week of the semester.

Each group will have a designated discussion leader. You will “meet” your discussion leader the first week of class.

Your initial posting must occur by Wednesday of the week at 11:59 PM CST.
Your replies must be posted by Friday at 11:59 PM CST.

If your initial post is not posted on time, you will automatically be deducted 2 points. If your reply posts are not posted on time, you will be deducted 1 point for each post. Thus, it is imperative that you plan ahead and make sure your discussion forum posts are published on time each week.

Your discussion forum grade will be calculated each week. You are eligible to earn 10 points each week. Your initial post will be weighted at 6 points and your responses will be worth up to another 4 points.

I will grade your work according to these expectations:

a. Initial response (6 points)

Each student will earn up to 6 points by posting a well researched and carefully thought out reply to my initial prompt. These posts need to be between 350 and 400 words long and should include citation to at least two appropriate course materials (readings/lectures). Please note that this does not mean two different PowerPoint slides; if you choose to cite something from the PowerPoint, your other citation must be from readings, podcasts, or videos. In your initial post, please refrain from providing your opinions unless I specifically ask for them. Stick to the facts! If you feel so passionate about the week's topic, and you cannot resist writing about your opinions, you must support them with well-researched data. Please do not use Google for research purposes. Instead, use the search engine Google Scholar, as this will take you to a plethora of peer-reviewed academic sources that you may use to support your own ideas.

b. Replying substantively to peers (4 points)

You will earn 4 points additional credit for replying to two of your peers' original posts. These replies must be substantive in nature. In other words, you cannot just say things like "I agree" or "good post." You need to actually engage with what the person has said and explore its ramifications. Your responses are more appropriate places for opinions. However, once again, you must support your opinions with well-researched data. If you decided to use material other than that assigned in class, please do not use Google for research purposes. Instead, use the search engine Google Scholar, as this will take you to a plethora of peer-reviewed academic sources that you may use to support your own ideas.

Tips for Discussions:

Discussions are graded based on the following criteria:

- a. Relevance to the topic at hand
- b. The quality of the comment to the topic
- c. The comment's contribution to the overall discussion
- d. The quality and clarity of the writing in the comment
- e. The decorum and respect show to other posters in the thread.

One way to think about these criteria is to ask yourself the following questions before you post a reply:

- a. Does my reply relate to the material from the text and the post that I am replying to?
- b. Am I making a valid point that nobody else has made? Is this something that needs to be said or am I replying just to reply?
- c. Does my reply contribute to the overall discussion and make others want to engage in discussion?
- d. Is there any way that someone can misunderstand what I am saying in this comment?
- e. Can the words being written in my comment be seen as rude or mean spirited?

Padlets: (5) 10% of Total Grade

In this course, we will use a platform called Padlet, which is a way to share informal posts and dialogue about course materials. Five times throughout the semester, you will be expected to make a post to your group's Padlet. These weeks, I will post specific directions for how to do so to Moodle. Padlet is essentially an online bulletin board (like the old kind with push pins and cork board, but electronic). On Padlet, you will be able to make posts according to the provided directions. You will also be able to read and see other peoples' posts. This will let you get to know some of your peers better. It will also enhance your learning experiences because it will function as a place to engage with the course materials, but in a creative and less strictly structured way. Padlet posts are due each Friday by 11:59 pm.



Course Schedule

Please Note: You are responsible for all of the readings, podcasts, and films on the schedule below. The majority of the assigned readings, podcasts, and films are listed here on the syllabus and can all be found on Moodle. However, additional materials may be assigned from time to time. These will be noted by links in the weekly power point presentations. The syllabus is provisional and is subject to revision as necessary.

The PowerPoint lectures are designed to correspond with the materials for the week. You are expected to read the texts, listen to podcasts, watch all films and video clips, and read the PowerPoints. Sometimes the PowerPoint lectures will have similar information as the material and sometimes the power points will depart from the material, which means you need to carefully read everything!

Week 1 (January 7-11) Introduction to the Course and Syllabus

1. Read over syllabus carefully
2. On January 10, you will be assigned your discussion group on Moodle
Please note that since students drop and add classes for the next two weeks, some folks might disappear from your group and others might appear.
3. On January 11, please introduce yourself to your discussion group and your discussion leader using Padlet

Week 2 (January 14-18) Women's Studies: Perspectives and Practices

1. Claiming an Education. By Adrienne Rich
2. Forty Years of Women's Studies: Origins and Intersections. By Beverly Guy-Sheftall and Bonnie Thornton Dill
3. Feminist Politics: Where We Stand. By bell hooks.
4. A Day without Feminism. By Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards
5. Still Needing the F Word. By Anna Quindlen
6. Podcast: Saying the F-Word: What Would a Feminist Do?

Assignments:

- Quiz
- Padlet
- Exam Opportunity

Week 3: (January 22-25) Gender: Masculinities, Femininities, and The Gender Spectrum

****No School Monday MLK Day****

1. The Five Sexes, Revisited. By Annette Fausto-Sterling
2. The Social Construction of Gender. By Judith Lorber
3. Unraveling Hardwiring. By Cordelia Fine
4. Wrestling With Gender. By Deborah H. Brake
5. Guyland. By Michael Kimmel
6. Bodies and Bathrooms. By Dan Frosch
7. Podcast: Princesses, Pink, and Girly Culture: What Would a Feminist Do?

Assignments:

- Quiz
- Discussion Forum

- Exam Opportunity

Week 4: (January 28-February 1) Intersections

1. Toward a New Vision. By Patricia Hill Collins
2. Intersectionality. By Vivian M. May
3. There is No Hierarchy of Oppression. By Audre Lorde
4. Opening Pandora’s Box: Adding Classism to the Agenda. By Felice Yeskel
5. The Social Construction of Disability. By Susan Wendell
6. Report from the Bahamas. By June Jordan

Assignments:

- Quiz
- Discussion Forum
- Exam Opportunity

Week 5: (February 4-8) Inscribing Gender on the Body

1. Breast Buds and the “Training” Bra. By Joan Jacobs Brumberg
2. If Men Could Menstruate. By Gloria Steinem
3. Prosthetic Power. By Aimee Mullins
4. What We Do for Love. By Rose Weitz
5. The Specter of Excess: Race, Class, and Gender in Women’s Body Hair Narratives. By Breanne Fahs and Denise A. Delgado
6. Hold That Nose. By Lisa Miya-Jervis.
7. Why Are Young Women Without Wrinkles Using Botox? By Dana Berkowitz
8. Love Your Fat Self” by Courtney Martin

Assignments:

- Quiz
- Padlet
- Exam Opportunity

Week 6: (February 11-15) Sex, Power and Intimacy

1. The Cult of Virginity. By Jessica Valenti
2. Doing Desire. By Deborah Tolman
3. Queer by Choice, Not by Chance: Against Being Born This Way. By Lindsay King Miller
4. Dismantling Hierarchy, Queering Society. By Andrea Smith
5. New Orientations: Asexuality. By Karli June Cerankowski and Megan Milks

6. Introduction: The New Culture of Sex. From American Hookup: The New Culture of Sex on Campus. By Lisa Wade
7. Podcast: Hookup Culture: The Unspoken Rules of Sex on College Campuses

Assignments:

- Quiz
- Discussion Forum

Week 7: (February 18-22): Health and Reproductive Justice

1. Southern Discomfort. By Carl Gaines
2. A Global Health Imperative. By Nancy Fugate Woods
3. Welcome to Cancerland. By Barbara Ehrenreich
4. From Rights to Justice: Women of Color Changing the Face of US Reproductive Rights Organizing. By Zakiya Luna
5. What it Takes to Get an Abortion in the Most Restrictive U.S. State. By Audrey Carlsen, Ash Ngu and Sara Simon.
6. Video: Undue Burden: Trying to Get an Abortion in Louisiana

Assignments:

- Quiz
- Discussion Forum
- Exam Opportunity

Week 8: (February 25-March 1) Gender and Violence

1. Beyond the Politics of Inclusion: Violence Against Women of Color and Human Rights. By Andrea Smith
2. Masculinity, Mental Illness, and Guns: A Lethal Equation? By Michael Kimmel
3. Anti-LGBT Violence: Three Essays. By Tony Hobday, Michelangelo Signorile and Hope Gillette
4. Sexual Assault on Campus: A Multilevel, Integrative Approach to Party Rape. By Elizabeth Armstrong, Laura Hamilton, and Brian Sweeney
5. Film: *The Hunting Ground* (Netflix)

Assignments:

- Quiz
- Discussion Forum
- Exam Opportunity

Week 9: (March 6-8): Media and Culture

This week is Mardi Gras and we have an abbreviated week of school. There are no assigned readings this week. Instead, you get to watch two films! There is also no quiz this week. However, you are still expected to complete the discussion forum this week

1. Film: *The Mask You Live In* (Netflix)
2. Film: *Misrepresentation* (Netflix)

Assignments:

- Discussion Forum

Week 10: (March 11-15) Family Systems, Family Lives

1. Marriage and Love. By Emma Goldman
2. The Way We Never Were. By Stephanie Coontz
3. Who Wants to Marry a Feminist? By Lisa Miya-Jervis
4. “The New Momism,” by SJ Douglas and MW Michaels
5. Can a Gay Man be a Housewife? Gay Fathers Doing Gender, Family, and Parenting. By Dana Berkowitz
6. Singled Out. By Tamara Winfrey Harris
7. Lullabies Behind Bars. By Beth Schwartzapfel

Assignments:

- Quiz
- Padlet

Week 11: (March 18-22): Work Inside and Outside the Home

1. A Brief History of Working Women. By Sharlene Hesse-Biber and Gregg Lee Carter
2. The Triumph of the Working Mother. By Stephanie Coontz
3. Maid to Order: The Politics of Other Women’s Work. By Barbara Ehrenreich
4. Color me Nontoxic. By Momo Chang
5. Virtuous Valentine? Think Again. By Hannah Levintova
6. Podcast: What Would a Feminist Do? Dealing with Workplace Sexism

Assignments:

- Quiz
- Discussion Forum
- Exam Opportunity

Week 12: (March 25-29) State, Law, and Social Policy

1. Name It. Change It. By Rachel Joy Larris and Rosalie Maggio
2. Too Poor to Parent? By Gaylynn Burroughs
3. Looking Beyond the Wall. By Robert Neustadt
4. Struggling to Find a Home. By Patricia Leigh Brown

Assignments:

- Quiz
- Discussion Forum

Week 13: (April 1- 5) The Criminal Justice System

1. Film: *13th* (Netflix)
2. Readings TBA

Assignments:

- Discussion Forum

Week 14: (April 8-12) Privilege and Inequality

1. Toward a Sociology of the Superordinate. By Michael Kimmel
2. How to Explain Privilege to a Broke White Person. By Gina Crosley-Corcoran
3. On White Pride, Reverse Racism, and Other Delusions. By Tim Wise
4. White Privilege and Male Privilege. By Peggy McIntosh
5. The Black Male Privileges Checklist. By Jewel Woods
6. Cisgender Privilege. By Evin Taylor

Assignments:

- Quiz
- Padlet

Week 15: (April 15-19): Spring Break

Week 16: (April 22-26) Activism, Change, and Feminist Futures

1. Feminist Men. By Byron Hurt
2. Fear of Feminism: Why Young Women Get the Willies. By Lisa Marie Hogeland
3. TIME: Person of the Year: The Silence Breakers
4. More Readings TBA

Assignments:

- Discussion Forum
- Exam Opportunity